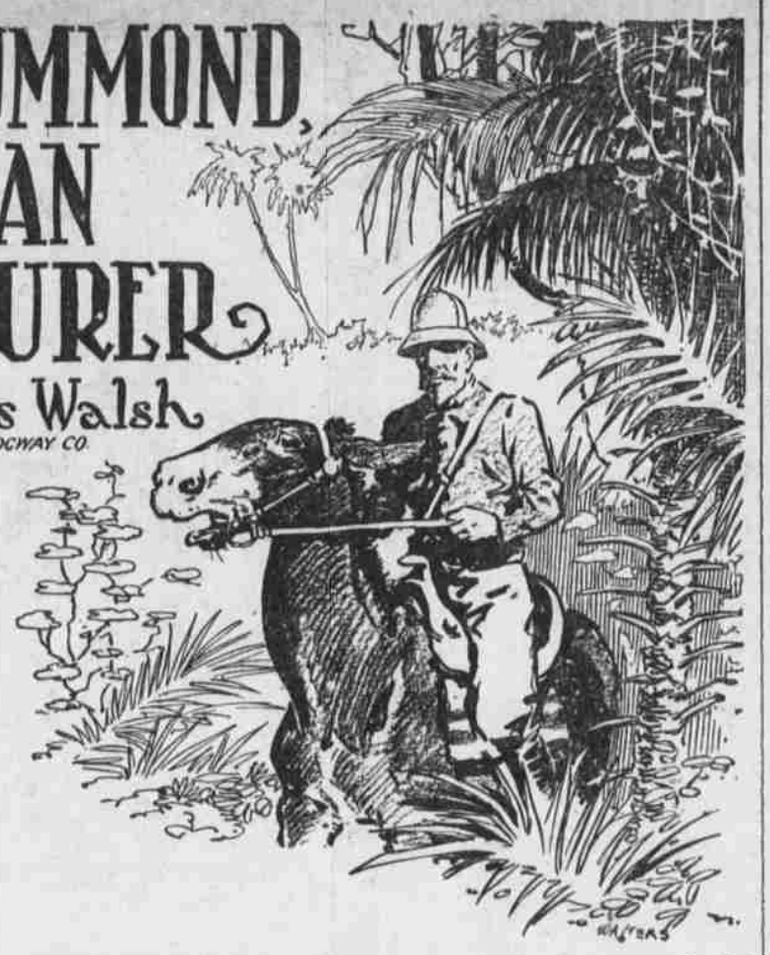
JOHN DRUMMOND, GENTLEMAN ADVENTURER

By Henry Collins Walsh



TYPES are modified by their environment, and to suit the times. But they are eternal, and live by that perpetual adaptation to environment which Mr. Spencer tells us is the law of life. When we say "gentlemanly adventurers," we immediately think of Raleigh and Morgan and Ponce de Leon, and such gentlemen of the old school, but they have their successors today, and will have till the love of adventure is dead in the human heart.

I have met several of these adventurers in the course of my personal wanderings. Here is one of them.

After many days of traveling on muleback, through jungles and over mountains, in Spanish Honduras, I found myself at a little inn in Santa Barbara, a town situated in the interior. Here, one evening, I was indulging a cigarette and after-dinner coffee with my landlord and his lady, when in upon this peaceful scene walked John Drummond.

I had heard of him, and he was good enough to say that he had heard of me, and that he had come into Santa Barbara to take me out on his ranch, if I would accompany him.

I was obliged to refuse his invitation, but we remained together for that night and part of the next day, at Santa Barbara.

Aside from displaying himself in the altogether and showing me a body fairly perforated with bullet-holes, the visible reminiscences of many battles, he was reticent concerning his life and adventures, as such men usually are. What I record about him I have learnmainly through a friend of mine who has been much in Central America and who knows John Drummond well.

John Drummond, I have learned, was born in Mobile, Ala., but just when I do not know, nor can I tell anything of his early days, and it suffices to say that he really became interesting when the spirit of adventure led him into the unsettled country of Honduras. Here he became a soldier of fortune, and rose to the position of commander-in-chief of the army of Honduras under the former President Vasquez, whom he helped into power; for the presidency of Honduras is won not by votes but by bullets.

Vasquez remarked to my friend that John Drummond was always absolutely loyal to whatever cause he happened to be enlisted in.

At the end of his enlistment he would fight just as well and loyally under the flag of a former opponent.

Well, Vasquez had gone out of power and was anxious for another term. In Honduras this is a matter not of conventions and elections, but of uprisings. So Vasquez rose, and engaged Drummond to help him. Drummond was first sent to capture a quartelle, or small fort.

He stole upon it during the night and darkness. He armed his men only with daggers, and made them strip off every article of clothing. Nude, they stole into the quartelle, and immediately extinguished all lights. In the confusion and darkness, Drummond's men knew each other by the feel of the bare skin in the hand-to-hand combat that ensued, and in this way the garrison was quickly exterminated.

Drummond, with a small body of troops, then made a rapid march to the Atlantic coast and captured the principal port, Puerto Cortez. His force consisted of eight Texans and a few hundred native soldiers.

An army of government troops were stationed at San Pedro, a town at the end of a line of 40 miles of railroad which starts at Puerto Cortez and represents the entire railway system of Honduras.

One day it was reported to Drummond that the government troops were on their way from San Pedro on a banana train. He immediately took possession of an engine and tender, placing the latter in front of the engine. Then he barricaded it, mounted a small piece of ordnance and his eight lusty Texans upon it, and so went serenely forth to meet the enemy.

As soon as the banana train hove in sight, he let fly at it with artillery and rifles, and stampeded the invading army, who took to the woods in terror.

Drummond and his men returned in triumph to Puerto Cortez. Then an alleged gunboat—nothing but a converted tug—was sent to attack Drummond by sea. Sunk partly in some ancient earthworks commanding the harbor was a very ancient piece of Spanish artillery, quite a large smooth-bore brass cannon, artistically ornmented after the old Spanish fashion. The ancient piece could not be swiveled because of the embrace of Mother Earth, but Drummond waited until the diminutive man-of-war was on a line with his piece of ordnance, then he bade his gunner to fire. As nothing happened, Drummond, who was smoking, leaned over and placed the lighted end of his cigar to the touch-hole. The cannon belched forth its missile, but it also rose in the air, struck Drummond in the face and knocked him senseless. He has been minus an eye since this exploit.

He was taken in a stretcher to the home of the British consul, where he lay for some days, "lost to life and use and name and fame."

Meantime, the invading government forces entered the town. The eight Texans discreetly vanished, and Drummond's small army took to the tall timbers.

The commanding general demanded Drummond from the British consul, who parleyed, having cabled to Jamaica for a British man-of-war. So, while the parleying was going on, the Britisher appeared hot-footed from Kingstson, the largest and most awe-inspiring instrument of naval warfare that had ever been seen in those waters.

It fired a saluting broadside, just to proclaim its deep-toned bass, and the general of the government troops was invited on board. After the usual exchange of courtesies, the British captain told the general that if anything happened to Drummond he would blow Puetro Cortez to an even hotter climate than it at present enjoys.

This casual remark, emphasized by a stern array of 12-inch guns, produced a salient effect, and Drummond, who had partly recovered, was allowed to depart in peace, while the cruiser sailed off to its own waters.

But Drummond was captured as he was making his way to safety, and was incarcerated in a dismal prison cell in San Pedro. It was the intention to give him a trial for the sake of appearance, and then to shoot him. As a solace due to his rank and station, he was allowed a bottle of claret each night for his dinner.

One evening he sat in his dim and lonely cell awaiting his dinner, and perhaps also looking forward with anticipation to his bottle of claret.

One of the jailers entered bearing the bottle.

"Have a drink with me, senor," suggested Drummond.

"With pleasure, senor," responded the jailer.

There was but one glass, so Drummond took the bottle in his hand and filled the glass. Then he handed it to the jailer, who bowed and placed the glass to his lips. As he did so, Drummond hit him a fearful blow on the head with the almost full bottle, crushing in his skull. Seizing the soldier's musket, Drummond rushed forth and shot his other jailer dead.

By good fortune, a mule, saddled and bridled, was tethered to a near-by tree. Mounting the mule, Drummond rode off into the darkness, and, you may be sure, kept the mule going at its highest mule-power. With the animal dead-beat, he crept into a village at daybreak, woke the alcalde from his slumbers and told him in excellent Spanish that the rascally Drummond had escaped, that he was in hot pursuit and that he wished a fresh mule at once, in the name of the presidente.

The mule was furnished, and again Drummond rode off at top speed. But his adventures were not yet over. He was captured by a squad of government soldiers near the borderland of Guatemala, the haven of safety he was seeking.

After a brief court-martial, Drummond was sentenced to be shot at sunset. He was backed up close to a low wall, beyond which were jungle and thick woodland.

Ranking as a general in the insurgent forces, Drummond asked permission that he be allowed to give the word of command to the soldiers to fire.

The soldiers stood ready with guns leveled at the doomed man.

"Ready—fire!" called Drummond, and fell just before the flash. The volley passed over him, and the soldiers behald the amazing spectacle of a man whom they thought shot to death suddenly arising and jumping over the low wall.

Once in the jungle and protected by darkness, Drummond made his way over the borderland and found safety in Guatemala.

And as the wheel of fortune and revolution has turned since this episode, he is now a respected citizen of Honduras, and has various mining interests to keep his fertile mind from stagnating.

Plant of Many Uses.

In 1830 the congress of Mexico issued an order that none of the state documents should be indicted upon any material other than the paper made from maguey. This is the national plant, and some have insisted that the very word Mexico was derived from the word mex-til, which means maguey.

The Mexicans do well to be grateful to this product of their country, says the Ave Maria, for it is food and drink, house and raiment to the Mexican. Its other name is agave, or century plant, from the popular fallacy that it blooms only once a century, whereas it really blossoms every eight years.

The stalk of the blossoms reaches to the height of 25 feet and looks like a giant candlestick, for it carries often as many as several thousand blooms. Many fields of maguey miles in length are to be found in Mexico, and there is scarcely a bit of the plant which cannot be used in some manner.

Bananas From Brazil.

Brazil, encouraged by the great northern demand for bananas, is going to enter upon the cultivation of that fruit in a large way. An American company has been organized to operate in the state of Parana. From day to day the lands of the valleys of the Cubatao and Cubataozinho rivers are being transformed into banana plantations of great extent. The American company will sell portions of this land and distribute banana cuttings to agriculturists who will develop their plantations with full assurance of the ready transportation of their product. The company will buy or charter special vessels in sufficient quantity to transport this fruit.

Queen Wilhelmina and the Council.

The International council of women recently convened at The Hague was somewhat disappointed in not receiving a message of greeting from Queen Wilhelmina. The royal lady, who was at her country palace, is said to display no interest in the women's progressive movement. At the opening reception of the council a representative of Queen Emma, the "queen mother" was present to bring greetings and the wish for a successful meeting.

Queen Bess Liked Her Ale Strong.

What the London Chronicle calls Mr. Bryan's "teetotal hospitality" would never have done for Queen Bess. For wherver Elizabeth went there ale had to go also—strong ale. Great were the trials of her host, the earl of Leicester, as expressed in a letter from Hatfield to Lord Burleigh: "There is not one drop of good drink for her here. We were fain to send to London and Kenilworth and divers other places where ale was; her own beer was so strong as there was no man able to drink it." And one quart of this "excellent wash" of good strong ale for breakfast, we are told, put the queen in good spirits for the start of the day's work.

Few Mirrors in Japan.

It is only during a comparatively short time that the Japanese have known glass as occidentals know it, says Harper's Weekly. When the first railroads were built passengers in the coaches often put their heads through the glass, supposing the frames of the windows to be empty, and the railroad company at length pasted pictures on the glass to call attention to the fact that a solid substance was behind them. The masses of the Japanese today do not know the mirror as it is known in the west. The richer people have one mirror, indeed, but usually the glass used in the mirrors sold to the populace is not quicksilvered, being merely well polished. As for cut glass, it is practically unknown in the island, and glass drinking cups are rare.

HEAT OVERCOMES GETTYSBURG VETERAN

A pitiful sight indeed is this, of a member of the G. A. R. who came unscathed through the three days' fighting of the greatest battle of the Civil war, overcome by the heat at the reunion of Gettysburg survivors, and being led off the field to medical aid by a couple of young guardsmen.

WITH BLUE AND GRAY AT GETTYSBURG

Many were the stories told and innumerable were the incidents, both pathetic and humorous, which marked the great reunion of the Union and Confederate veterans on the Gettysburg battlefield. Commemorating the fiftieth anniversary of the most stubbornly contested battle of the Civil war, fragments of the hosts which faced each other in that conflict gathered to renew old acquaintances and to recount the deeds of other days.

Here is a story which was told by A. T. Dice, vice-president of the Reading railway:

Once upon a time there were a veteran in gray and a veteran in blue. They came to Gettysburg and in the course of events and visits to hotels they happened to meet. They looked over the sights of Gettysburg and the monuments of the field. But they found they must part.

The one in blue lived in Oregon; the one in gray in New Orleans. They went weeping together to their station and passed by train after train, deferring the parting that must come. Just what they said, just how they reached the final grand idea of the meeting, Mr. Dice did not know.

But, however, yesterday they finally decided that the time for parting had come. The one from Oregon could not figure how to reach home via New Orleans and his gray comrade, while willing to see the west, didn't have the money for a ticket.

They lined upon on the platform as their trains stood waiting and then before the crowd, they slowly stripped off their uniforms and exchanged them there while the curious flocked to see them.

The Oregonian who came proudly to town with a coat of blue, went as proudly away with one of gray and the veteran from Louisiana who boasted the gray of the south sat with swelling chest in his new uniform of blue.

James H. Lansberry of St. Louis, Mo., who enlisted in the Third Indiana cavalry from Madison, Ind., recited to his comrades the details of his capture in the town of Gettysburg by Confederates 50 years ago. Following the skirmish just outside of town which marked the opening of what was to be a world-famed engagement, he had been detailed to assist in carrying a wounded officer to the old seminary in Gettysburg. While in town frantic women flocked about him and begged that he tell of the battle. He remained to tell the story, with the result that he had to spend several days in following the Confederate army as a prisoner. After tramping 50 miles over rough country without shoes he succeeded in escaping and finally made his way back to Gettysburg, where he remained till August in assisting in the care of the wounded, which were housed in the seminary, churches, barns and public buildings.

Harry K. Thaw has come to the financial rescue of Gen. Daniel E. Sickles from his cell in Matteawan. He sent a letter to Chairman Schoonmaker, having charge of the celebration of the fiftieth anniversary o fthe battle of Gettysburg, in which $1,000 in cash was inclosed. In the letter Thaw wrote that he felt the deepest sympathy for General Sickles because of the misfortunes that had come to him in his old age. This sympathy the writer declared, was heightened by the fact that Thaw had two uncles in the Union army

The camp is full of unexpected meetings. Every day brings forth numerous meetings between men who have not seen one another for many years. Many are commonplace, but some are extraordinary. For instance, here is one:

I. D. Munsee of Erie county, Pennsylvania, a soldier in the 111th Pennsylvania, was captured by the confederates at Peachtree Creek, Ga., when he was one of Sherman's army on the celebrated march to the sea. He was being conveyed to the rear by a confederate soldier when the union batteries opened fire upon the party among whom he was a prisoner. The man who was guarding Munsee was hit and fell, knocking Munsee down and lying on top of him.

Seeing his chance of escape, Munsee lay very still under the unconscious confederate while the battle raged around them. That night he slipped from under the body and escaped to the union lines.

"I thought that fellow was dead," said Munsee, "but I saw him today. Poor fellow, his mind's bad, and he didn't recognize me, but I was sure of him. I couldn't even get his name, but I'm goin over later to the Georgia camp and try to find out who he is."

One of the most interesting places in camp was the lost and found bureau, located under the benches in the big tent. Everything found on the grounds was brought there and thousands applied every day for missing articles.

There were at least 100 crutches piled up in the bureau, dozen or so applicants having called for them. Those who come to redeem their lost crutches seldom can recognize them and most of them go away with somebody else's.

There was one wooden leg also lying unclaimed. It was brought in by a Boy Scout, who had found it under a tree.

Several sets of false teeth were found.

A grandson of Francis Scott Key, composer of "The Star-Spangled Banner," is here. He is John Francis Key, aged eighty-two, of Pikeville, Md., and he is a veteran of the Second Maryland infantry of the confederate army.

Wearing a suit of gray, Key came into town, weak and almost dropping. He has been in failing health, but declared he was "going to see Gettysburg on this occasion or die."

One of the oldest veterans in the big camp is Captain W. H. Fleig of Houston, Texas, who was ninety years of age on his last birthday, February 23. During the war he served with distinction in the marine department of the confederate navy. Captain Fleig is one of the best preserved men in camp and is more active than many of the other veterans a score of years less advanced.

Wearing a tattered uniform of gray, Alexander Hunt of Virginia was the central point of interest on the streets of the town. Mr. Hunter was wearing the identical suit and hat which he wore at Gettysburg fifty years ago.

The suit was in rags and has a bullet hole through one of the sleeves. He carried all his accoutrements used at Gettysburg and wore a union belt taken from a foe here. Mr. Hunter was a member of the Black Horse cavalry.

One of the unadvertised reunions of the celebration occured in the confederate section of the camp. A fife and drum corps of men in blue tramped up and down the streets of the confederate part of the city of tents.

They stopped before the tents, played such a fanfare as only drums and fifes can make, summoned forth the occupants and shook hands, threw their arms about the gray shoulders and in a dozen other ways showed their feelings of friendship.

They kept it up for hours and visited practically every "reb" tent. Their reception was as warm as their greeting.

A remarkable coincidence of the camp was the meeting of two men of exactly the same name, coming from towns of the same name, but in different states. One fought on the union side in the battle of Gettysburg, and the other with the confederates.

These two men are John Carson of Burlington, N. J., and John Carson of Burlington, N. C.

They met by the merest chance. The Jersey Carson was walking along one of the streets, and saw a man in gray. Just to be friendly, the Jersey man stopped him and gave him a greeting. It was not until they had talked for several minutes that they discovered their names were identical.

One bearded veteran of an Illinois regiment told of an incident that happened 50 years ago.

"As we rode through Gettysburg that last time," he said, "I remember a little girl stopped my horse and said she wanted to give me a bouquet. I got down and she pinned a ribbon—a little purple ribbon to my coat. 'Wear that in the next battle you go into,' she said.

"'We're not going to have any more battles around here,' I told her.

"'Yes, you are,' she insisted. 'Those hills back there are full of rebels.'

"'I wore that purple ribbon through the battle. I never saw the girl afterward, but I've kept that ribbon, and it's back at home in Illinois today."

A striking contrast is seen in the menu provided for the soldiers fifty years ago and what they enjoyed this year:

1863—Breakfast—Hardtack, bacon, beans and coffee.

Dinner—Bacon, beans, hardtack and coffee.

Supper—Beans, hardtack, bacon and coffee.

1913—Breakfast—Puffed rice, fried eggs, fried bacon, cream potatoes, fresh bread, hard bread, butter and coffee.

Dinner — Fricassee chicken, peas, corn, ice cream, cake, cigars, fresh bread, hard bread, butter, coffee, iced tea.

Supper — Salmon salad, macaroni and cheese, fresh bread, butter and coffee.

When the house of representatives recently undertook to name a committee of its members to represent it at the reunion of the blue and gray at Gettysburg it was found that not a veteran of the Civil war sat on the Republican side of that body. The only Union veterans in the house, three in number, are all Democrats, and six veterans of the Confederate army also sit on that side. In the senate, however, there are six Confederate veterans on the Democratic side and six Union veterans on the Republican side. As indicating the passage of time, it today in congress more veterans of the Spanish-American war than of the Civil war. Nineteen members of the senate are veterans of the war with Spain. One member of the house, who has not seen war service at all, served five years in the signal corps of the army as a private, and Delegate Quezon of the Philippines was a staff officer under Aguinaldo during the Philippine rebellion.

My heart beats faster tonight, said Gen. Daniel E. Sickles. The thronging hordes who have motored and walked and trolleyed to my camp today have swept their hats off and hailed it as "Sickles Day."

And so I have always regarded July 2.

It was on this day a half century ago that God gave me strength to serve my country and my maker better than I ever had been able to serve them before.

It was upon this day in '63 that I lost my leg and did my little part by the mercy of God to preserve the Union.

July 2, 1863, broke hot and clear. Just as in the early hours today a molten sun poured out of a sky but a trifle overclouded. I had retired shortly after midnight the previous evening and slept the quiet, dreamless sleep that is generally attribute to babes.

Last night I enjoyed just the same kind of sleep. But that is to be expected of a young fellow who at ninety-three is still able to read without his glasses, eh?

Many men who came today to shake my hand told me they were too busy to do so 50 years ago—that their whole hearts and minds were wrapped up in the conflict to come.

"I hid in a barn when I discovered that Confederates had arrived in town, but I left it when it was peppered by infantry fire and concealed myself at the mouth of an alley," said Lansberry. "While I remained in the alley two of my comrades attempted to dart across the street to another alley with a hope of escaping from town. They got to the middle of the street when guns of Confederates stationed at street intersections cracked and they fell in a heap. I was soon found and disarmed."